

#### 4. PROJECT SUMMARY

##### PROJECT SUMMARY

SNC Reference Number

(enter if previously assigned)

**080156**

**County:** Sierra County

**Applicant:** Feather River Land Trust

**Project Title:** Dotta Property Fee Title Acquisition

##### PROJECT GOAL

This project will enable the Feather River Land Trust to acquire fee title to the 976-acre Dotta Property located in Sierra Valley, southeast of Loyalton in Sierra County. FRLT plans to convey the property to the California Department of Fish and Game as a permanent addition to the adjacent Smithneck Creek State Wildlife Area.

##### PROJECT SCOPE

The 976-acre Dotta Property is located approximately 2.5 miles southeast of the town of Loyalton, in Sierra County. The southern and eastern boundaries of the property border the Smithneck Creek State Wildlife Area and the Tahoe National Forest. To the north and west, the property borders relatively undeveloped tracts of private land (see maps). The Dotta Property provides critical migratory, wintering, and breeding habitat for the Loyalton-Truckee Deer Herd, outstanding breeding bird diversity, important montane riparian and montane meadow habitats, and functions as a significant groundwater recharge area for the Sierra Valley Basin. There are 4 miles of ephemeral streams which drain directly into Smithneck Creek, a key watercourse in the headwaters of the Feather River. The property is composed of approximately 45% bitterbrush-sagebrush habitat, 25% grasslands, 20% eastside pine forest with juniper and mountain mahogany components, and 10% montane meadow and montane riparian habitats.

Current uses of the property include cattle ranching and local recreational use, including hiking, horseback riding, and hunting. There are no structures and no one resides on the property at this time. Due to the important habitat value of the Dotta Property to the Loyalton-Truckee Deer Herd, this property is a high priority parcel for conservation by the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB). The Executive Director of the WCB has indicated that the property will be on the WCB February 2009 agenda for consideration of fee title acquisition in partnership with FRLT.

Protecting this property would synergize with other efforts to protect key properties within Sierra Valley. Specifically, this project would: a) protect water quality by directly protecting 4 miles of

streams and associated riparian habitat, along with an important groundwater recharge area, within the upper Feather River Watershed from residential development and other incompatible uses; b) provide enhanced educational opportunities to schoolchildren living in the communities of Sierra Valley; c) maintain a working landscape - FRLT intends to continue ranching on this property while we hold fee title; d) expand protection of critical habitat for the Loyalton-Truckee Deer Herd; e) enhance public use and enjoyment of the lands by allowing continued public access; f) expand the Smithneck Creek State Wildlife Area by conveyance of the property from FRLT to the CA Dept of Fish and Game. FRLT will pay all property taxes on the property during the term of its ownership.

As of September 2, 2008, an appraisal, a preliminary title report, and all legal work have been completed and funded by the Feather River Land Trust. The property owners, Mathew and Kimberly Dotta, and FRLT have executed a 1-year option agreement, with closing expected between April and August, 2009. A complete summary appraisal has been sent to the Wildlife Conservation Board and the property will be placed on the WCB February 2009 agenda for funding consideration. The Northern Sierra Partnership has endorsed and made a financial commitment to this project.

The \$200,000 requested from SNC will be used by the Feather River Land Trust solely to purchase fee title of the Dotta Property in collaboration with funding from the California Wildlife Conservation Board (\$650,000), the Northern Sierra Partnership (\$130,000), and the Sierra Business Council (\$30,000).

### LETTERS OF SUPPORT

No letters included with this application

### SNC PROJECT DELIVERABLES AND SCHEDULE

DETAILED PROJECT DELIVERABLES	TIMELINE
Authorize payment of \$200,000 towards fee title purchase of the Dotta Property in collaboration with previously listed partners. 100% of SNC funds will be allocated to the fee title acquisition cost. All staff and legal time, along with other project costs, will be funded by other sources.	December 2008
Use of SNC funding, along with partner funding to close ESCROW on Dotta Property.	To be completed by August 2009 or sooner

6 month progress report	June 2009
Final report	January 2010

### SNC PROJECT COSTS

PROJECT BUDGET CATEGORIES	TOTAL SNC FUNDING
SNC contribution towards fee title acquisition of the Dotta Property	\$200,000
	\$
	\$
	\$
	\$
	\$
	\$
	\$
	\$
	\$
<b>SNC GRANT TOTAL</b>	<b>\$200,000</b>